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POEMS.

POEMS.

BY

THOMAS BARLOW.

LONDON:

HORACE COX,

WINDSOR HOUSE, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, E.C.

1894.

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POEMS.

SONNET: To A. M. B.

To HER, the music of whose voice inspired
My verse to echo its melodious strain ;
The brilliant flashing of whose eyes, that fired
My soul, and filled with love my song's refrain ;
To her, whose beauty, dazzling with its light,
Transfigured all my seeing with a joy ;
The earth and all its holding, fair and bright,
And pain to gladness, but a sweet decoy !
To her, whose soul its pureness lent to mine
Ennobling all my doing and my thought ;
Who, on my blindness, fixed her love to shine,
Song to my lips, my heart, sweet loving brought ;
To her, the source, with humble mien I bring
All that my muse hath sung or e'er will sing.

SONNET: MY LADY.

FAIN would I paint thy high perfection, grace,
The tender beauty of thy heart and mind ;
But vain the effort, for is there combined
God's dream of love and beauty in thy face.
E'en Nature's self, fair earth and sea and sky,
Her colours rich, rare wealth of jewellery,
Can ne'er supply comparisons with thee,
Nor e'en the dreams of angel hosts on high.

With all thy beauty, Love, thou hast no pride,
But shedd'st thy sweetness freely all around ;
And such thy worth, that men in spell are bound,
And all of ill and evil is decried.
God is more God,—by thee He's deified !
Whate'er is pure, more pure in thee is found !

SONNET: DESTINY.

Oh mine own Precious, can I find the word,
The look, the tone, or aught my love to tell?
Oh sweetest love-life of my soul, too well
Thy spirit, all my brooding depths, has stirred!
Long had I waited, long the lone desire;
My heart-strings trembling for thy touch, to sing,
Waiting the flow'r, the perfume thou must bring,
The bright red gold, thy purest cleansing fire.
And then we met, and yearning all was o'er—
The snow-capped mountain leapt the sky to kiss,
And wave lapped wave in joyance! oh the bliss,
We two, completed in one perfect whole,
To step, hand-clasped, to our eternal goal,
United, loving, for all evermore.

SONNET: TOO LATE.

WEARIEST of life, beneath the sombre skies,
Beside the grave, that holds the lov'd one, dead,
In vain recalling cruel words you said !
Alas, alas, too late the breaking sighs,
Forgiveness craving with your streaming eyes !
Beyond thy taunts and tears alike he's fled,
The silent tomb is now his dark cold bed,
And sternly love, forgiveness, thee denies.

Keep warm thy love and feed it whilst thou may
With soft sweet words and kisses, all that's dear—
The little deeds that speak a heart so true !
For Life is short, but Death sleeps on for aye
And then avails it not, the bitt'rest tear,
The vain regrets for slights and words that slew.

WHAT WOULD I DO !

Oh, do not ask me, Sweet, if death
Should take you first, what I would do ;
Oh, do not ask me, Sweet !—my breath
Chokes at the thought.—What would I do !—
What would I do ! what could I do !
But break my heart and die.
Ah Love, Sweet Love, without you nigh
Life is as Death.—What would I do !

What would I do ! What would all do !
The sun, the earth, the sea, the sky,
The gentle winds that for you sigh,
The birds that sing, the flowers too !
What would they do ! What could they do,
But pine and pine and die.
Ah Love, unto their end would fly
Life, Nature, all, for death of you.

Oh Death ! oh Death ! entwine the yew
For her I love, for me,
And take us both, when happily
Love-twined our limbs and beating true
Unto Love's golden melody
Throb unto throb, our hearts, and too
Our lips are joined. Then take thy due,
Oh Death, nor part my Love from me !

WOULD LIFE WERE DEAD!

THY will be done !—God's love and will ?
His love, indeed !—My heart to break,
My soul to crush, my love to take !
Go,—find ye from it your relief !
My heart will bleed, my anguish'd grief
Will cry aloud—Oh God !—Thy fate
Will curse. Thy love !—My heart ?—Thy
hate !
Ye comfort well,—ye love her still !

Come back, my Love, come back to me !
The world is dead and dark and drear,
And desolate, sad, without thee.
Come back, I am so weary, dear,
That were life dead—all life, all death,
E'en God that lives and stirs with breath—

(8)

I would not grieve ;—oh God, my pain !
Oh God, that I could weep again !

Would life were dead, and I at rest,
All else forgot, upon thy breast !

SONNET.

A WEARIED soul has gone unto his rest,
And toll and toll sounds sad the steeple bell,
Mourning for them, whose tears, all silent fell,
As hushed and broken, round the grave they pressed.
Oh for the grief, the sobs that heave their breast !
Oh for their hearts wung !—words can never tell,—
Oh for the chant, so solemn, and the knell,
And oh, the cry—“ Oh God, Thy will be blest ! ”

But singing birds attune their throats with joy,
The sun laughs brightly in the purple sky,
And diamond dew-drops glisten on the flow'rs ;
For thus it is that God this world endow'rs,
Soothes thus our sorrows, wipes our eyelids dry ;
Pain, gladness, His ; His love, their sole employ !

SONNET.

How like a man to curse and blame his fate,
The evil genius that has laid him low,
The elfish Fortune that is e'er his foe,
Unhappy wretch, he victim to her hate !
How falsely said for soothing to his state
That, " What is man, to turn the ceaseless flow
Of Destiny ; to 'scape the falling blow !
Hath crushed it not, the mighty and the great ? "

Oh sapless man ! oh feeble will ! for shame,
Thou who art God, with but to will to do ;
Not fate nor fortune, 'tis thyself to blame !
Thy fate, thy fortune, thou thyself must hew !
Unto thyself, oh man, be but thou true,
And terror-fate dissolves into a name.

SONG: TO-MORROW.

Its turning hath the longest lane,
Sing heigh ! Sing heigh !
The darkest, heaviest night of pain
Will pass away.
And skies so clouded now with sorrow
Will shine, with brilliant light, to-morrow.

The flowers die in winter cold,
But still sing heigh !
Spring doth the fairest buds unfold,
Then think of May.
From smiling hope, thy comfort borrow,
The flow'rs will bloom again, to-morrow.

Look to the Future ; Past is past,
Sing heigh ! Sing heigh !

The darkling present will not last
Beyond a day.
And noble striving, midst life's sorrow,
Will be, immortal, crowned, to-morrow.

FAME.

OH, but to sing a single song, to write a single verse,
That ages hence will beat with life, will throb the
 hearts of men !
Oh for the wish, the longing thought, the pray'r to
 bless my pen ;
To dream I hear, men yet unborn, my golden song
 rehearse !

A simple song, I'd sing me from my heart,
God's soul and thought would there in verse enshrine,
And sweetest love, that is our richest part,
And oh the altar, delicate and fine !

Or oh my cross, to gather up a tear,
Embalm the sorrows that our hearts have felt !
Good lack, my verse would change it, bright and clear,
A star, a pearl, soft tears again to melt !

A simple song, a magic rhyme,
Wonderful as life itself, sublime,
Perfection rare, a flawless gem,
Worthier than crown or diadem !
Oh but to write it !—Were my life the cost,
Were it but written, life were nobly lost !

SWEETEST SINGING.

SING ye songs of jubilation,
That will flood the world with light,
Fill our souls with exultation,
Roll away the depths of night ;
Bind all hearts in love together,
Flood all life with golden weather,
Set all wrong aright !

Gladden earth with heav'nly beauty,
Fill with throbbing hope the soul,
Charm us at the word of duty,
Lift our eyes to God—the goal ;
Teach us, charm us, fill with fire,
Sing ye songs that raise us higher,
Songs that upward roll !

SONNET: NIGHT.

ALL love is beauty, and all beauty song,
Too sweet for utt'rance—writ on golden skies,
On smiling earth, on beating hearts that throng
Adoring some lov'd idol—speech in eyes ;
That purest, truest, all the loving tell !
And fount of love, of beauty, song—the night !
So very sweet the sphere songs rise and swell,
That as the world, enwrapt in living light,
So all my soul, with godhead dread and high ;
And music, trembling into form, unfolds
In all that is and all that is to be,
Such loveliness as true perfection holds,
Eyes earthly blind, can never hope to see !
Oh blessèd night, oh cloudless, peaceful sky !

RENUNCIATION.

WITHIN the soft, rose dream-light of the fire,
 Caressed by shadows as they flit and go,
 My lady sitteth ; and her perfect grace,
 Up from the earth lift up the thoughts, her own
 Such purity and tenderness and light !
 See there she sits and turns some score of song,
 Sweet, old-time music, full of throbbing tense,
 Sad unto tears and unto laughter glad,
 That, as they stray, her fingers, o'er the keys,
 And straying, strike some deep, low, thrilling chord,
 My heart-beats still, and all my soul vibrates ;
 Or softly lulls my spirit into rest
 Some rippling cadence, as through lily stems
 Stray murm'ring streams, or sweet-tongued breezes
 sigh
 Through golden tree-tops on an autumn eve.

And in the shadow stand I, still, and watch,
 With all my soul a-burning in mine eyes,
 My sight transfixed upon my darling there,
 The maiden sweet, the maiden soft and pure,
 And dear and dear, as she alone can be
 The worship of our heart and its desire.
 And all my being in my gaze is drawn,
 Vibrating true as magnet to the pole,
 Or waters rolling to its level fixed.
 And oh her beauty, who can tell it, rare,
 Like unto peer as holds not all the world,
 Nor poet's dream, nor truth revealèd clear !
 Her half-turned cheek as moss-rose fresh unblown,
 And soft and downy as a ripened peach,
 Or as the velvet on a sphinx's wing ;
 Hair flossy silk, which Phoebus stooping down
 Had tender kissed unto a shimm'ring gold ;
 And oh her eyes—my sight, alas, is blind,
 As with long gazing on some light intense,
 So deep, so true, so filled with pow'r and dreams,
 And loving trust and sweet simplicity.
 She only looks ; her eyes search out my soul,
 So full of love and longing for herself.
 In thunder throbs my heart, my brain, my sense,

While tongue is bound for all that it would tell
 With fear and dread ;—so burns the fire within !

And then she smiled ; such radiance lit her face,
 A sunbeam flashed from out her soul to shine,
 And daylight broke and fears were swept away,
 And courage grown, from warmth her smile suffused,
 Words stammered forth my pleadings and my hopes :
 “ I love thee, Love ; ’tis all that I can say,
 I love thee, Love, and thee, and thee alone ;
 And oh forgive the daring that would raise
 Mine eyes to thine—a slave’s unto his king’s !
 But, dear, I must ; without, all life were death,
 And death were what, could worse than death be
 felt.

Whate’er I dreamed, in thee stands all fulfilled ;
 Whate’er I hoped, whate’er I loved before
 Of beauty, joy, ere then I saw thy face,
 In thee is found ;—thou hast usurped my soul !
 Thine, thine is all ! Thou, where else stood before,
 God, pride or else—thy name for evermore !
 My life to crush or glorify is thine,
 To noble make, and pure as thine own life,

Or——Oh my darling !—Life what were the worth ?
But crumbling earth to mother earth again ! ”

My heart stood still ; its doom what would it be ?
And Time in torture clasped Eternity.
Shone in mine eyes despair with struggling hope,
In conflict fierce, with hope well nigh eclipsed. .
And list'ning Silence, breathless, strained her ear
And caught her breath, and bent her down to hear,
Listing as when the day dawn broke of life
Sphere music sweet, entranced soul and sense !
No word she spoke ; her eyes looked into mine,
A soft pink flush suffused from throat to brow,
And told my heart what words could ever do,
And then—I knew my love was not in vain.

Oh happy world to hold such utter bliss,
Two hearts, when sealed their loving with a kiss !
Why picture dreams, why hope beyond this sphere,
When all divinest, sweetest, dwelleth here ?
What purer, holier, in the realms above,
Than bodied forth by love, love, human love ?

That night flew by; long hours and full of dreams,
 With fancy pictures in each glowing coal,
 Prophetic, aye, of happiness and bliss !
 What dreams, what dreams entwined within my
 mind,
 With all the gladness of that present time !
 Life spread its way, how smooth beneath our
 feet !
 How thrust their cups, dew diadem'd and sweet,
 Each dainty bud, each lovely flower that grew,
 Great Nature's gems, beneath my darling's feet,
 Content to die, if but her garment frill
 In passing knew their gentle lovingness !
 How sang the birds sweet music for her ear,
 Their love-songs trilling with as joy as leapt
 And coursed within my love-entangled veins !
 Then, how it danced, the sunlight on our path,
 How sparkling flashed, and in what splendour fell,
 Cloaking her round with glory as her own !
 How bright was life, my lov'd one's hand in mine,
 As to the end our linkèd love I traced !
 How bright, how blessèd with what perfect bliss !
 So filled with joy that pain fled far away,
 And Sorrow brushed her tears aside and smiled !

And oh the vows that night I swore and sealed,
The hopes, sky-reaching for my dear one's sake !
Did she but wish, e'en in caprice or mood,
Some star of eve that proudly 'sailed her ken,
My hopeless love had borne ambition blind
On eagle wings to snatch from out its course
That shining bead for gem within her crown !
How bravely climbed the dizzy heights of fame,
The topmost peaks, where lay the victor's crown,
All for her sake ! What task I would not dare
For one sweet smile, repaying all my care !
Oh happy dreams ! Oh happy, happy dreams !

Her beauty thus my heart and soul had filled,
The low sweet music of her voice my brain,
Till lulled in sleep, wove I once more again
The same fond dreams, the same bright pictured
scenes.

Then sudden woke I from my dreaming bliss !
Ah me, so bitter, they so pleasant were !
My senses strung to pitch that madness claims,
Shrill, piercing, and with horror ghastly filled ;
With fear, sight blind ; and nostril, quiv'ring, tense ;

Hands clenched tight, till nails had gored the flesh,
 And tongue parched thick, and breath that gasped for
 breath.

With darker gloom each flick'ring shadow fell,
 And haunting ghosts that, long, oblivion hid,
 Rose up again, in horrible array,
 And, grisly, swarmed to claim me as their own.
 Their eye-balls starting, gleamed with mad delight,
 And froze my blood, and set my brain aflame.
 Faster each shadow on the other crept,
 And grinned and leered, and mocked with savage
 glee,
 And danced with frenzy—driving me to bay.
 My father, there, as cursing mad, he died ;
 And there my brother with his red-gashed throat,
 Red gaping still, and eyes turned sockets white ;
 And she, my sister, sweet-faced, drooping down,
 With eyes lack-lustre, in a convent hid !
 “ Oh God ! Oh God ! Oh save me from mine own ! ”
 “ Keep off ! Keep off ! ” I wildly shrieked and cried ;
 Off ! Off ! ”—and fought with furied strength and power,
 Till down I sank, exhausted, trembling o'er
 In every nerve with palsied fear and pain.

Long hours I strode that chamber, battling doubt,
 Debating right, and with sore conflict torn.
 "My Love! My Love!—Oh bitter, bitter woe!"
 Then blackness, cursing—"Wherefore was I born?"
 "Oh God, their sin, revenged, why on my head?
 Oh death! Oh death! End all my misery!
 What is my strength to bear this evil hour?
 What is my will to do the dreadful right?
 And what my weakness?—Cast for hell's exchange,
 That love to me was all my life and soul!
 Oh God of Life, this is too hard to bear!
 This is a cross more dread than Calvary!
 Me, could I bear!—But her, but her to crush;
 That gentle flow'r!—Oh more than coward, cur!
 And then, what bliss did she but never know!
 Bliss, oh my heart?—and what of murder done?
 Back, ghastly thought, nor tempt me, frail, too much!"

And so my soul in bitter anguish rent
 Night long and weary, till the grey light dawned.

Then, trembling, wrote I: "Oh mine own, forgive"—
 Mine anguish and my torture know not now

How found expression for my darling's eyes,
Nor how my bitter tale unfolded then—
“ Forget my being, or if thoughts will rise,
In pity think the fault was not my own.”
And then—“ Good-bye and bless thee!—Fare thee
well ! ”

Then crept I forth, crushed, broken, dead to life,
And all the world in sympathy was still.

“ And thou, oh God ! is this thy justice, right,
Is this thy love—Thou fiend !—dar'st thou tell ?
Why should I bear my father's sins and ill ?
Why should I think of them that are to come,
When they, as sure, more sacrifice must bring ?
Am I then nought ? Thou God, who made me so !
Am I a toy, I as thyself divine ?
Curse thee, for ever—curse thee, day and night,
And curse thee all, till sound of curses rise
And hurl thee forth thy high estate and might !
Curse thee, curse thee—in dying curse my soul ! ”

STORM TOSSED.

I.

Howl loud, ye Winds ! ye Lightnings fire
And scathe and crash the forest's pride !
Shriek wild, ye Whirlwinds—yet aspire
Till God himself shrinks 'fore thy tide !

Roll, Thunders—with thy mightiest might !
Still louder roar !—Do lions whine ?
Pause not, with all thy vengeance smite ;
Wreck all creation—nor repine !

Oh Hell's array, come forth and aid,
With fiend voice the chorus swell ;
Sweep all in one tempestuous raid
From whence all came—back, back to Hell !

II.

My Soul ! my Soul ! these bitter doubts, this strife
That lasts with life, and rends and tears and gnaws
Thine inmost depths, but kills not ;—this to flee,
Death, blank, dreamless !—joy to the waking thought,
When sleep all that dread train of phantoms brought,
More cruel than awaking haunted thee ;—
Than meek, approving God's injustice,—laws
Of bitter hate and cruel wrong to Life !

Laugh at blind faith, or still believing, curse
That grim creator—Life, his maliced play !
Curse him that calmly marks the might of wrong :
The toil-crushed slave, the Dives purple clad,
The sin, the crime, the woe, the utter bad
Of life ; the frenzied wail, the piteous song
Despair's, that hears nor seeks the pain allay ;
Calm marks good, evil-turned ; all better, worse.

Curse loud and long !—But why ?—The anguish deep
From fellowship of woe and wrong, so weak
Thy strength to turn the scales to joy and love

Breeds doubts 'gainst which thy reason vainly beats,
As surging waves the rocky coast. Hate greets
Thee, scorning !—Evil reigns !—The gentle dove
Of peace hath flown !—Black darkness all !—no
streak
Of light to cheer the path !—Death, welcome sleep !

III.

Then, as the storm, its fury spent
And mourning died away,
The moon its tender radiance lent,
The Zephyrs 'gan to play,
A solemn calm—dread tempest's birth—
Fell sweet on sea, the heav'n, the earth.

A voice, an angel's, thrilling, low
As music of the spheres,
From out the sky it seemed to flow
And banished all my fears.
It spoke in tender love a word
My broken heart, with joy, that stirred.

* * * * *

A THOUGHT.

WHAT rules my thought?—To-day it is serene,
Bright, glorious, flashing forth with sunlight sheen ;
And then, to-morrow, dark is all its sight,
Black, dreary, all confused in wrong and right.
Keep thou the thought, that warms thine inmost
heart—

Perhaps the darkling is but still a part
That goes to form Perfection's grandest whole,
The body crude, to God's divinest soul.
And now this word—so old, yet ever new,
That wings its flight out to the world and you :
Truth unto God is steadfast truth to man,
And sacrifice sincere, which love doth fan,
Of humankind. That wrong, the vilest done
To weakest, humblest, poorest, 'neath the sun
Is done to Thee, who sees yet not refrains,
Or only else, where Right is gauged by gains.

Cursed be the man who strives not with his might
To crush the falsehood, glorify the right,
That marks a burden kill, nor bears it too,
And more dishonours such.—My friend be true !

IF SIN BE SWEET.

IF Sin be sweet and Virtue vain,
One bliss divine, the other pain :
Alas, how soon it sets the day !—
Thou, hast thou pierced the gloom of aye ?
Beheld the crown, the branded stain ?—
Then, worship in thy dismal fane,
Bow 'neath the scourge, the loaded chain,
What were not best—the worm decay
 If sin be sweet !

Oh Life ! oh Love ! for ever reign ;
Shine, sunlight ; dance, ye murm'ring main ;
Sing, joyous birds ; blush, flowers of May ;
Oh Time, stand still thy course and stay ;
Kiss lips and laugh, for all is gain
 If sin be sweet !

SPHINX.

Musing and sad, beside the shore I stood,
Soft sighing heaves the bosom of the wind,
The waves make music murmuringly low,
And oh, so cold the moon and stars look down.

The world is resting with a hushed repose,
Silence and peace in all things save my soul,
And there old doubts that brood and bitter pain
That yearn for answer, yearn and yearn in vain.

Long stood I there and gazed across the deep ;
“Light ! Light !” I cried, within mine eyes despair.
But splashed the waters, moonbeams silent fell,
And back no answer came to cheer my soul.

My lips gave utt'rance, what my mind had asked :
The great, deep secret of that Sphinx, our life,
The object of the striving and the end,
And all the wherefore, why, and whither, whence.

I asked why sorrow, sin, and death should rule,
Why not revealed the purpose of our way ;
The old, old questions that each soul has asked,
And asked and asked, as asked I then, in vain.

In vain, in vain !—perhaps this was the best,
And best the changes of our life ordained,
The answer best,—the silence of the night,
The sweet sea music and the sad wind's sigh.

VOICES.

LIST, list the sound upon the mountain height,
The grand sea music by the ocean's shore,
Vast, vague, concording in its hush and roar,
Voiced as by spheres in their eternal flight.
Hush to the murmurs, notes of wild alarm
Blent in one rushing roll of sweetest charm.

List with thy soul, vibrating as it flows
The wild deep psalm of universal praise :
Triumphant symphony that sets ablaze
Our spirit-selves with strange etherial glows.
Voice of the waves, borne on the winds along,
Vast, echoing music—Nature's blissful song.

Hark, still again, to that shrill piercing cry,
Hideous, despairing, shrieking as from hell,

Filled full of sorrow, mournful as a knell,
Wrenched as from souls that agonising die.
What voice discordant this, so full of fear,
Grating its jangled notes upon the ear ?

The voice of man, that rang to God on high,
Humanity, in all its woe that cried,
Sweeping the chords in one tumultuous tide,
Jarring great Nature's glorious harmony.
It would be heard—from earth to sky it ran !
It would be heard—the woe, despair of man !

Fraught with the groaning of the toil-crushed slave,
As toiling died they in their darksome night ;
Black with the curses of the masters' might—
All, they, of bounty to their servants gave.
These were the echoes that so wildly swept,
Pitched in the sobs that women, children, wept.

When will it cease, this harsh, terrific song ?
When will it come, God's Kingdom, to the world ?

When from the rocks, oppressive might is hurled,
When manhood's strength displaces hideous wrong.
Then will it come !—Speed fast, thou coming day !
Come and thou must, despite all Hell's array !

I ONLY KNOW.

I KNOW not what this life may mean,
A phantom, nightmare, or a scene
 From some grand everlasting play.
I only know that here I stand,
 Shines bright yon sun—that it is day,
And full of ill teems all the land.

I only know that life is short,
Nor care what after death—'tis nought.
 But this, the cause that life employ :
To raise man to his high estate,
To pluck from out his heart all hate,
 And fill his deepest soul with joy.

Oh for the strength and pow'r of speech
The hearts of men to touch and teach

And stir such love as Christ on cross
In dying proved, as in life taught !
Oh that mankind such loving sought,
All else without considered loss !

IN A CHURCHYARD.

A FEW short years of time,
Their names will fade away,
Alas, to utter nought,
As night before the day.

Gone !—where ?—we know not now ;
Shall ever know ?—How vain :
“ Above ! ” — “ To God ! ” — The earth
Demandeth earth again.

Think not !—Resume thy task,
To it bring all thy might.
How deep they sleep around !
Soon cometh, too, thy night !

Work for thy brother man,
Show him how bright the sky,
Turn his pent moan to song,
Then—lay thee down and die.

No stone may mark thy head,
E'en lost for e'er thy name,
Yet thou hast lived and worked and fought
Unto Eternal Fame.

DREAM ON.

LIFE is so short!—Come, hie we to the wood,
Some shady nook, entwined boughs o'erspread,
And green grass growing—pillow for our head;
A shaft of sunlight just to pierce the shade,
As if by chance it thither coyly strayed;
And not a sound.—Sweet silence reign supreme!—
Give fancy wings, shut eyelids fast and dream.
This, sweetest, best, of only worth and good!

What care, my soul, to do or dare a deed?
Since all are daring;—small the deeds when done,
Else of destruction, wronging—Vandal, Hun.
What care, the world stands on its head or heels?
Preach as ye will or do—who heeds or feels?
Why waste in striving?—If endow'd with might,
Then, oh, to slay the wrong, to right the right!
But now—dream on, nor to the world give heed!

THE END.

Oh for the end, to sleep and rest for aye !

Lost in oblivion bitterness of life :

The dull and deadly round from day to day,

The crushing anguish and the weary strife.

Better the end—far better not to be,

Than all this gloom, this endless misery !

Better the end than count the weary time,

The hours, days, years and scores of years to come ;
Than mark the steep ascent our feet must climb,

Must, dragging, mount with heart and senses numb,
Eyes blind with tears and tense to trace the bend
That leads to home, to rest.—Better the end.

* * * * *

The end draws nigh!—Oh God, one moment more,
Just one short year!—My work it is not done!
No hope beyond,—the grave opes wide its door!
Oh bitter end, oh race so quickly run!
All blank, all over then, all gone, all past!
Oh Time, stand still, nor fleet away so fast!

Oh Sun, stand still and be for ever day,
Oh passing hour, be fixed eternity!
Oh for the moments that have passed away,
And oh, glad World, our little love of thee!
God, but one moment, but one moment more;
Take all but life!—oh bitter end!—'tis o'er!

GIPSY SONG.

MERRY, merry gipsies, all are we,
Living 'neath the greenwood tree,
Versed in all the arts abstruse,
Tell your fortune, steal your goose.
Thus we live, and thus we die,
Sing the winds our lullaby :
Merry, merry gipsies, merry, merry gipsies,
Merry gipsies all are we !

Here our lives are fresh and free,
Singing, laughing, merrily ;
Here we tune our joyful throats
Unto the birdies' silv'ry notes.
Who would not then gipsies be,
Stealing, fibbing, carelessly ?
Merry, merry gipsies, merry, merry gipsies,
Merry gipsies all are we !

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

Oh for the sin to all who life inspire
With noble longings or a brighter hope,
Light the black darkness where we blindly grope,
And to the music of their God-strung lyre
Teach all our hearts to beat in Love's refrain,
Sweeten our sorrows, lift the load of pain !

Oh for the crime to stone God's angels bright,
The singers sweet who teach His love divine,
In beauty moulded,—beauty all the sign
For happiness and wond'ring pure delight !
To him, as all, the bitter wrong the same,
The birthright stern of everlasting fame.

Or was their glory so intense, that blind
Ye knew not, World ! the worth till all too late,

Till all fulfilled their cruel, deadly fate ?
But, music silenced, ye in sorrow bind
Their brows with wreaths !—Oh for the laggard care,
The marble pomp, when life was dread and bare !

So young, so young !—His fingers had not learn'd
The chords, but struck, had filled the earth with joy,
With undreamed gladness, sweet, without alloy,
With passion, such as had for ever burned
With golden ecstasy within our hearts,
Suffusing beauty in Life's meanest parts !

Oh for the hopes, the music hushed for aye,
More sweet than sung, that yearned within his soul,
The glowing thoughts, the beauty that to roll
Upon our world had nursed it into May
Of sunny love !—Alas, the bitter wrong,
Scorn ever and neglect to gods of song !

SHADOWS.

I.

OH days of youth ! oh days of youth !
Gentle and glad and fair,
When the sunlight fades and the days are done
How sweet are ye still, and rare !
But the sweetness tastes of a sadness, too,
Of longing and vain regret.
For oh to be young, to be young again
With all the long years in our debt !

II.

So strange ! so strange !—yet still the self-same scene,
Unchanged each feature that my boyhood knew :
The distant hilltops and the meadows green,
The homestead dear and that sad, silent yew,

My idling hands, to time, in days of yore
Upon whose bark in letters straggling drew
My name ;—bequeathing for all evermore !

Or—was I changed ?—the self of years gone by
Another self to what I know me now !
Two shadows of some bright Eternity !
Two furrows only by the self-same plough !
Flitting this shadow, where the other fell,
Staying my course adown Time's stream some
bough,
To live in dreams the days I love so well !

In winter frozen, for bright summer flow'rs,
Alas, alas, for wishes all so vain !
Fast merged in night the length'ning twilight
hours,
For youthful hopes, sky-reaching !—ah the pain,
Hopes unaccomplished !—Faint the shadows grow,
And jagged scars but all that do remain
Of carved name and deeds of long ago !

And that is all !—The little tale is told !

To be forgot the end and aim of life,
And but to wither do the flow'rs unfold,

Black night engulfing high Perfection's strife
And purest hoping !—This the richest worth !

The tangled weariness unrav'ling, but a knife
For shrift undoing—crumbling back to earth !

TWILIGHT.

GOOD NIGHT! Good night!—The sun has sunk to rest,
The soft rose blush hath died upon the heights,
And hush!—'tis God that broods in thoughtful
mood!—

Such silence still!—such solemn solitude!
And sadness sweet, the Twilight's, oh, so blest
With all its mists and shadows as they roll,
Entrancing, creep upon my weary soul.

The gaunt grey trees stand blurred against the sky,
A dreary moan floats out the owl's tu-whit,
Wings rustle by, and dews are falling tears
For wailing ghosts that haunt the bygone years.
All is so sad!—The night winds only sigh
And sigh and sigh and sob, again, again,
While in my heart sinks deep the load of pain.

Then stars peep out the darkness of the night,
 And from our pain flash out bright golden truths,
 And all is peace. The world, its cares, are nought,
 So worthless, small, the famed prizes sought
 When scorned, alas, our godhead and our might.
 While thoughts we feel, but cannot speak, are born,
 And flood our hearts with light as of the morn.

There 'neath the sky, the dark, the blue, the deep,
 The vast gemm'd dome of this our temple, Earth,
 A Presence comes and takes us by the hand,
 Whisp'ring than us, our truest selves, how grand,
 And—"Faint not, heart! the rugged path and steep
 Leads upwards e'er!" And then we lowly kneel
 And stretch our hands till, groping, God's we feel.

THE KERNEL.

NOBLE striving, high aspiring,
Others with like passion firing,
Is the end of life ;
Is the fairest, purest beauty,
Ready e'er to die for duty,
Quelling sin and strife.

Calm enduring, stern denial,
Steadfast in our hours of trial,
Worth that none can tell.
Hoping, loving, flinching never,
Onward still and onward ever,
This, alone, is well.

AIDENN.

HUSH, hush thy sobs !—clasp fast thy hand in mine !
Hush !—all is known that was the great unknown ;
The dim to be, mysterious, bursts the veil
As changeless Present stands eternity,
Majestic, grand—o'erwhelming all my soul.

Dreams now are o'er.—Death is the life of dreams.
Hush !—Music sweet swells with the breaking day,
That Life had hushed to drear dead monotones
Or drowned in discords. Oh, the harmony
Infinite, deep, floats on the wings of Death !

List, oh my Love !—the scales have fallen off,
And where was dark lights up as shades intense,
Intenser light, God's purest, casting now ;

And Heav'n unrolls in all its majesty
Dreamlike, and where with life sweet dreams are
blessed.

Those soaring hopes, that Earth their wings had
clipped,
The great deeds toiled, but toiled at all in vain,
The drooping flowers that, stifled in the heat,
In glory bloom, are wrought unto their end,
And there fulfilled for all eternity.

Beauty and good and all that was the best,
Longed after, sought, or by blank failure killed,
Accomplish'd these ; and triumph swelled by pain,
And sorrow keen that was too hard to bear,
With evil deeds and guilt and hideous sin.

Death is so sweet, in that it brings us bliss,
And crowns our dreams and yearnings, all fulfilled :
The love our hearts had sought but never found,
The wreaths unwreathed, the songs that were unsung,
The shattered hopes, the ideals fallen down.

SONNET: FAREWELL.

DEAR Heart ! dost scorn and think thine all the pain,
The bitter cup to drain unto its lees ?
Souls that have loved can never love again :
Time long and e'er yon moon has loved the seas !
The cankered bud smiles fair unto the sight,
The mountain slopes know not the fire within,
But thou—the fiercest where the greatest din,
Nor where in silence, teeth enclenched, they fight !
Fate wills it else ; what hoped can never be !
And what is grieving to a scornful world !
But Love—hast loved ?—loves to eternity,
Aye, till the stars are from their courses hurled !
Dear Heart ! what words—nay, these can never tell
What I would say.—Farewell ! farewell ! farewell !

L'ENVOI.

As children in the darkness raise a song to still their
fear,

And lusty join in chorus lest aught fright'ning sound
they hear,

So in my darkness have I sung these songs to cheer
my soul,

And all away life's burdens, pains, and all its sorrows
roll.

And may be in my singing cherished I a sweeter hope
That to others of my fellow-men, who in like darkness
grobe,

As sweet a comfort bring they too, as brought they
to my life

To soothe, if not to help and cheer, in all its weary strife.

Go, little book, I cast thee out upon Life's troubled sea
With all my hopes, with all my fears, intents, dreams—
all in me !



